

NATIONAL PRODUCTS IN TOURISM
THE TOURISTIC ATTRACTIVE POTENTIAL OF LOCAL FOODS
AND HUNGARICUMS

Mária Stiblo

Teacher, Engineer, Phd student University of Pécs, Faculty of Natural Science Institution of Geology
e-mail: stiblo.maria@freemail.hu

ABSTRACT

My aim is to reveal the role of regional food products in terms of the local consumers' touristic motivation system. In order to do this, in the form of a quantitative survey I examine the respondents' consumption patterns, sources of information and knowledge and my purpose is to uncover some elements of the consumption motivation and system of attitudes.

In the planned research, I investigate mainly the local consumers' level of knowledge and attitudes with regional products and hungaricums. I choose the scope of components and touristic products from those which are under the origin protection of the European Union and from those which are products of the HÍR-collection or which are among the services of rural guest-table run by small-scale producers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism has become a well-known phenomenon in our country since the 1990s. Every specialist agrees that the viability of family-sized agricultural enterprises are based on having multiple sources of income. Two of the important elements of this could be the provided bunk bed or rural guest-table service. In the last twenty years, however, several such enterprises have failed in which the investors have not measured the attractive potential of the given service correctly or they have not been able to provide efficient marketing back-up in order to create demand for the touristic product. This can be regarded as a serious disappointment because in several other European countries –involving the adjacent Austria– the family atmosphered accommodation is very much liked with home-made cooking and local products. Nevertheless, the ability to maintain the population in the Hungarian rural communities have radically deteriorated, the chances of employment are decreasing and there is a continuous immigration to cities by the young and the active age groups. This process, together with the problems of rural development contribute to the increase of social tension.

The food-hygienic regulation made by the European Union in 2004 made it possible for the member states the small-scale food-processing and the creation of the simplified hygienic regulation system in terms of locally sold foods. Technically, it results that if these do not reach the regulated amounts –the farmers are able to produce certain foods under less stringent conditions than large food companies. These are called products by small scale entrepreneurs by the Hungarian regulation. The local small scale regulation with the 2010 modification makes pig-killing, ox-roasting or making stewed mutton possible. The phenomenon of rural guest-table was also introduced in 2010 which, opposed to the former and similar regulation, makes it possible to offer more kinds of products and allows catering for bigger number of guests (the previous barriers did not allow catering for a busload of guests). The modification of the 2010 Excise Act, simultaneously, makes it possible the offering of the home-made spirit – which can be called 'pálinka' in the case agreement with the spirit law. The aim of these measures is definitely the boosting of rural tourism by improving the attraction of rural catering with gastronomic specialties.

There is also a program called Traditions- Tastes –Regions which aims the improvement of national dish and food culture. The central element of the program is a collection (HÍR-collection) which collects those traditional Hungarian products – with recipes

and photographs- which can be regarded as unique and typical only of Hungarians. According to information deriving from administration the HÍR-collection will make up the basics of the food parts of the national depository (hungaricum collection) which is still in the preparation phase. These products with their outstanding quality and specialty serve as a curiosity not only for local but for foreign guests and besides sufficient promotional activity they can have serious attractiveness in the stimulus of touristic services.

One part of our hungaricums are also appreciated by the European Union and are included in its own origin protection system. This system – which involves geographical indications and the collection of traditional special products – is managed by the Ministry of Rural Development in our country. The products under communal protection can be regarded such national food treasures which are internationally acknowledged. However, their awareness and attractiveness are below the expected level because of the insufficient marketing communication.

2. THE PRESENTATION OF THE TOURISTIC PRODUCT

The available free-time for the tourist and the disposable incomes play an important role in the determination of the touristic demand. At the same time, in the choice of destination the consumer's attitudes and motivation are crucial. Consequently, since the tourist's choice basically relies on his own inner values and feelings, motivation becomes a concrete travel decision through the attractions of the destination.

Certain elements of the touristic supply are interdependent. Due to the complexity of a touristic product the quality of a certain element influences the quality of the overall demand. The tourist does not only look for accommodation or food but such an experience which these are parts of- in some cases determining parts- nevertheless the combination of these factors gives the complex touristic product. It comes from the interdependence of the elements of supply that the bad quality of one or two components is able to spoil the whole product.

Small-scale products, hungaricums and foods which are origin protected can be regarded as such national food treasures which possess touristic potencial and are able to increase the value of the previously defined touristic products. They usually produce their effects as components of an outstanding touristic product however, in some caes they can become main components. Besides a nationally-awarded spirit, a type of wine, a mangalica domestic pig-killing or a special fisherman's soup in many cases the accommodation or the set play only a supporting role. In application of this study:

- a) *branch depository*: the collection of the data of national values by competent national authorities
- b) *Hungaricum*: such national value which is notable for differentiation and highlighting, which has been typical of the historic or today Hungary for many centuries or through generations or which has been produced recently with its uniqueness, specialty and has become a symbol of the Hungarians.
- c) *National Collection of Hungaricums*: the collection of national values which have been declared as Hungaricums by the Committee of National Hungaricums
- d) *Depository of cross-border communities*: the group of cross-border Hungarian minorities and the collection of recorded or national values under care
- e) *Hungarian depository*: the collection of municipal, regional or branch depositories and the cross-border depositories of Hungarian communities
- f) *Regional depository*: collection of national data under the area of the County Council
- g) *National values*: such typically Hungarian products related to mental, generating activities, production culture, knowledge and traditions which are produced due to

mental, producing or artistic activities and are considered to be unique and special and which are regarded as significant from national point of view or at least one part of the country accepts as characteristic and well-known for the Hungarians and which can be characterised by Hungarian even abroad

- h) *Municipal depository*:** the collection of data of national values found in the area of the municipal depository

2.1. HUNGARICUMS

In recent years, due to the advantageous conditions, the care of Hungarian food culture has been appreciated. It was necessary, since after our accession to the European Union the possibility of direct supports which enable the Hungarian products to get to the market ceased. Partly due to this, the preparation of the law about the protection of hungaricums has been started.

Two parliamentary resolutions can be mentioned as the legal precedents of the hungaricum law. The first resolution – 77/2008. (VI.13) OGY resolution, about the protection of hungaricums – states that hungaricums represent unique national values and it calls on the government to work out the organisation of hungaricums together with science, government agencies, the regional and civil organisations, rural development institutions as well as develop the possibilities of their preservice and utilization.

One of the most important parts of the resolution that it classifies the collection of HÍR-program as a hungaricum.

The 77/2008.(VI.13) OGY resolution defines the definition of hungaricums: In the Hungarian-inhabited regions of the Carpathian basin a lot of values have been accumulated which as mental or food-industrial products- until this time- have survived the difficulties of the changing world. These values- which are uniquely and individually Hungarian specialties namely hungaricums – should be taken into account in our accelerated and globalized world. Hungaricums have geographical, historical, linguistic and ethnic images. Hungaricums are such special Hungarian products whose characteristic features are essentially and outstandingly Hungarian by character and which with their natural conditions, indigenous varieties and our growing and breeding traditions have a typical Hungarian criteria. The hungaricums with their characteristic of Hungarians, specialty and quality enhance our reputation and promote our appreciation in the European Union and all over the world.

The 122/2008. (XI.28) OGY resolution called on the government to hand in a law proposal with regards to the regulation of Hungaricums. The resolution indicates the aim of the regulation as follows: „After our accession to the European Union, in order to exploit market opportunities better it has become indispensable to differentiate the excellent quality, traditional and regional foods from mass products” or „after our accession to the European Union the system of direct support opportunities have ceased in order to promote Hungarian products to get to the market. The common competition regulation lets only the traditional and special quality products to spend sources on in the power of member states. That is why the collection and care of national values have been highly appreciated.

Besides, there is an important aspect to the EU legislation: „The marking of geographical location and origin in the case of agricultural products and foods in the 510/2006/EK regulation makes it possible to appreciate such products whose special characteristic feature can be related to the geographical location, namely these products can be produced only within that geographical location which has become determined in the accepted product description.”

2.2. Research ambitions

My aim is to reveal the role of regional food products in terms of the local consumers' touristic motivation system. In order to do this, in the form of a quantitative survey I examine the respondents' consumption patterns, sources of information and knowledge and my purpose is to uncover some elements of the consumption motivation and system of attitudes.

In the planned research, I investigate mainly the local consumers' level of knowledge and attitudes with regional products and hungaricums. I choose the scope of components and touristic products from those which are under the origin protection of the European Union and from those which are products of the HÍR-collection or which are among the services of rural guest-table run by small-scale producers. During the research I apply the following issues:

- The level of knowledge of the chosen product
- Attitude in connection with rural tourism
- The attractiveness of the chosen products
- The attractiveness of other products and services
- General touristic consumer characteristics in case of the respondent
- Demographical factors

From the received results I expect that it will be possible to determine the touristic potential of regional products and hungaricums compared with other products.

2.3. Research results

The number of items in the recorded sample is 1282. 42,60% of the respondents of the questionnaire was man, 44,70% was woman. Unfortunately 12,80% did not give information regarding their sex.

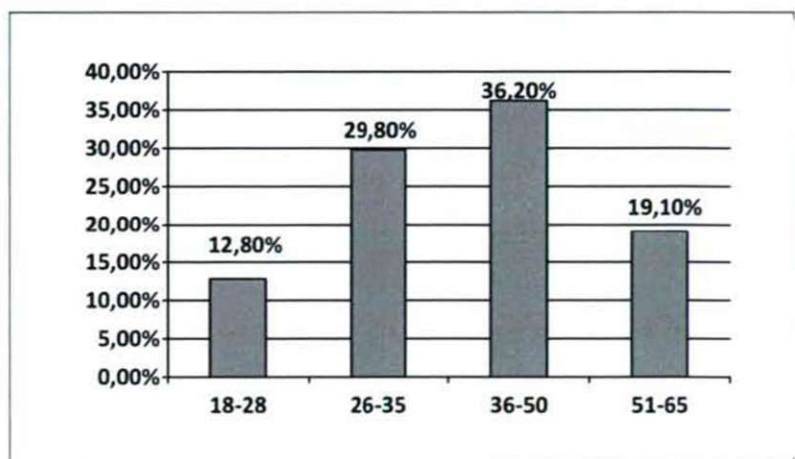


Figure 1. The distribution of respondents according to age

The age of the respondents was the following. 12,80% was those rate who were between the age of 18 and 25, 29,80% was between the age of 26-35, 36,20% was between 36 and 50 years old, 19,10% was 51-65 years old. There was no respondent over the age of 65. 2,10% was those rate who did not want to tell their age. The majority of the respondents

(44,70%) live in smaller towns, 29,80% live in county towns, 14,90% live in Budapest while 4,30% live in villages.

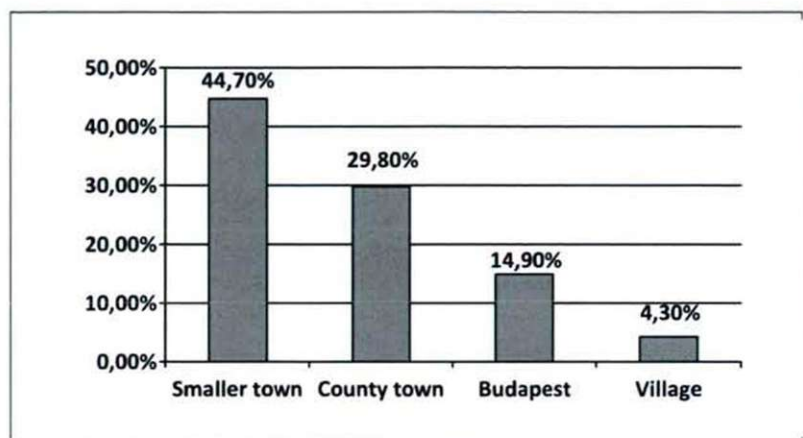


Figure 2. The distribution of respondents according to their place of residence

I also asked the respondents about the number of their children: The majority of the respondents do not have a child yet (52,20%), 13% of them have one, 28,30% have two, 4,30% have three, 2,20% have four children.

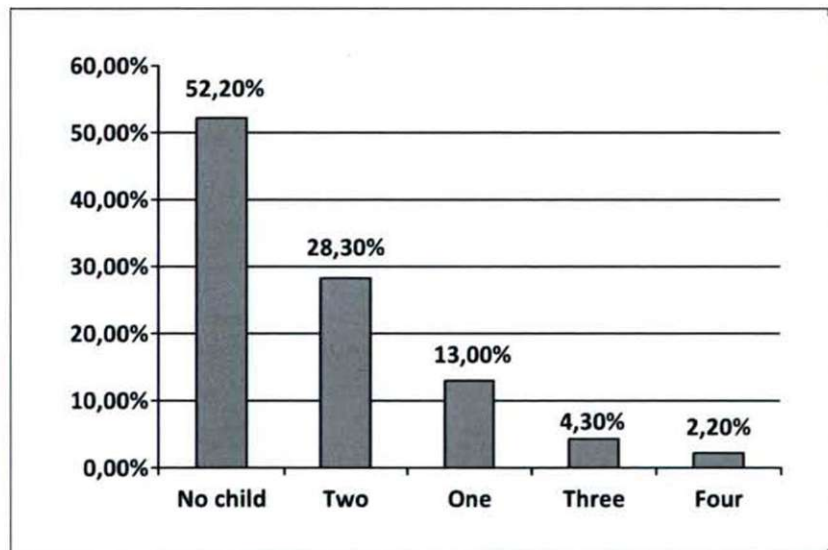


Figure 3. The respondents' number of children

Considering the highest school of the surveyed people, 4,30% have completed primary school, 25,50% of them have completed secondary school, 66,0% have completed college or university. 4,30% did not answer. 40,40% of the respondents have completed studies in connection with food industry or agriculture, 53,20% are not connected to them. 6,40% did not answer the question.

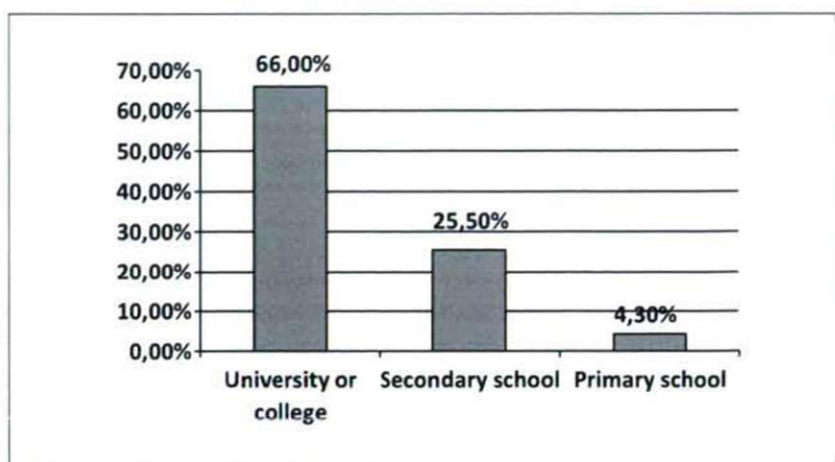


Figure 4. The respondents' highest completed school

The first part of the questionnaire dealt with travel habits. The majority of the respondents (36,20%) have the chance to travel somewhere with the purpose of relaxation where they stay for at least one night, the least number was of those (2,10%) for whom it is possible almost every weekend. 12,80% go on holiday about once a month, 17,00% go once in three months, 21,30% go once in a half year while 10,60% do not even remember when they went on holiday.

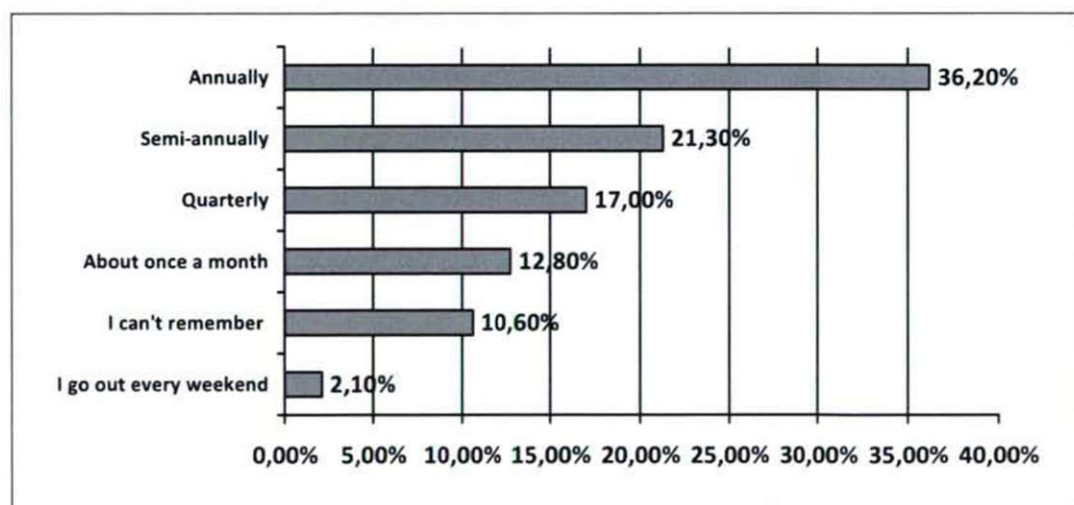


Figure 5. The frequency of travellings with the purpose of relaxation

In order to survey what distance a respondent travels in a case of travelling, I listed statements which had to be assessed from 1 to 5 by the respondent. They had to write 1 next to the statement which was practised the rarest and they had to write 5 next to the sentence which was the most frequent. According to the statistics it can be claimed that the respondents stay in Hungary the most frequently when they relax: the average is 3,68 through which the

biggest part of the respondents assessed 5. The average is almost the same (3,61) in the case of destinations within Europe: at this statement 48% of the respondents marked 5. In the rarest case a destination outside Europe was chosen since in this case the average was 1,63 and 68,3% marked 1. In the case of a regional destination the average was 2,57%.

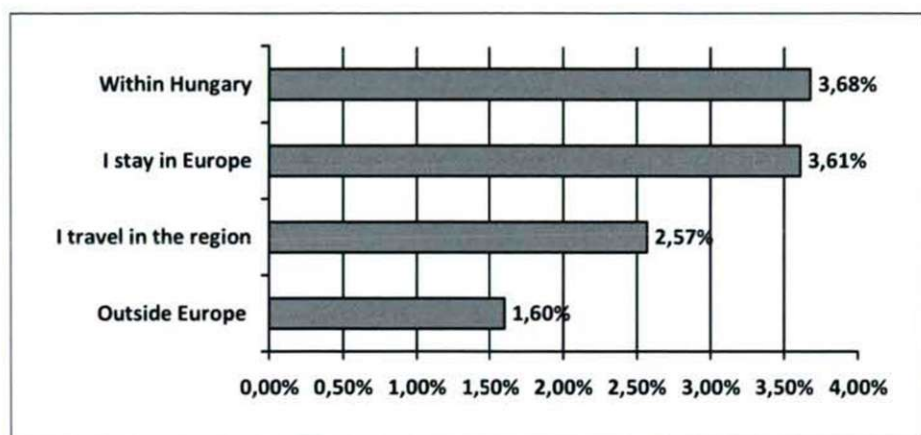


Figure 6. The distance of travel in a case of an outing

In determining the target of the travel the respondents were influenced by many factors. In the present case, respondents had to assess certain factors on the basis of a method seen above. Mark 1 means that the factor does not play a role at all, while mark 5 shows which plays the biggest role. For the respondents, the proximity of the resort is not particularly important since the average was 2,33. 42,2% gave mark 1 while visiting friends, relatives, festivals or village days received an average under 3. In the case of the former factor the average was 2,39 while in the latter the average was 2,57. The particularly cultural experiences factor received an average of 3. During the assessment of the survey it seems that the search of silence and peace and active relaxation received an average above 3, so it can be said that these influence the determination of the travel the most. The average of the previous factor was 3,26 in a way that 28,3% of the respondents gave mark 5, while the average of the latter was 3,53 in a way that 35,6% of the respondents gave mark 5.

The questionnaire also answers that question how much gastronomic values play a role in the choice of a destination. Overall, it can be stated that the respondents did not decide on their travel according to gastronomic values since while the average was 3,24 the factor in terms of which the respondent tends to discover the special food of a certain area, the average was under 3. The foods which can be related to national holidays (such as the Márton-day goose) mainly do not motivate people for travelling (43,5% gave mark 1, the average was 2,15). People go to a gastronomic festival because of its topic the rarest (40,9% gave mark 1, the average was 2,2). The respondents do not even go to wine tours either, since the achieved average was 1,73% (71,1% gave mark 1).

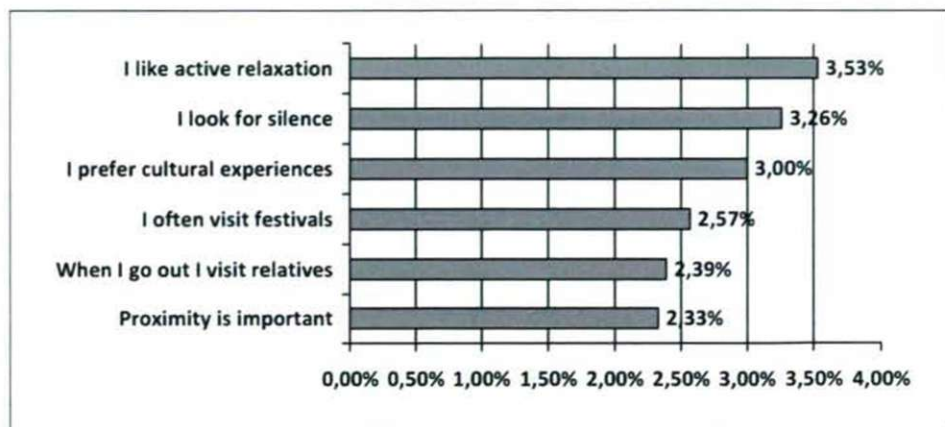


Figure 7. The role of certain factors in the choice of a destination

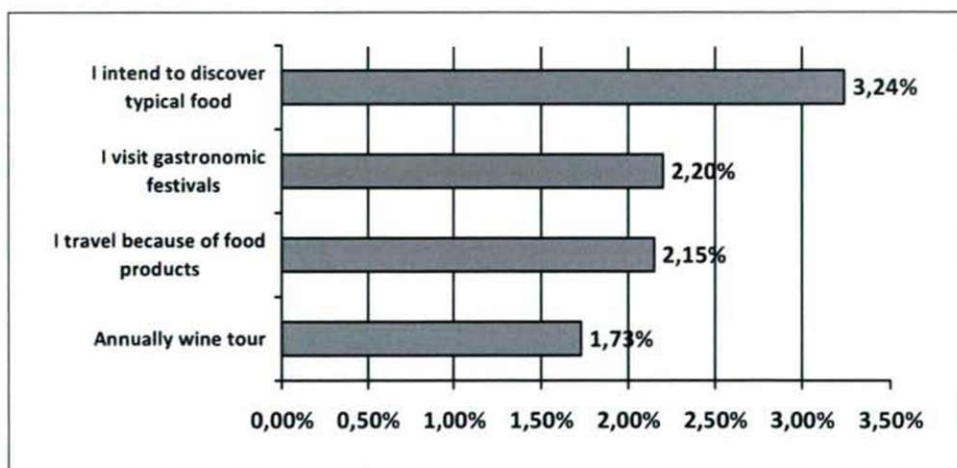


Figure 8. The role of gastronomic values in the choice of travel

I have also surveyed in the questionnaire how much respondents knew the meaning of the acronym: HÍR. From the four listed possibilities, the most people (80,90%) could choose the correct one. (Traditions-Tastes-Regions)

In the case of a product the trade mark on it meant something extra for most of the respondents, since 40,40% thought that it helped in the orientation among products which have similar features. 17,00% do not really know what kind of trade marks exist. For 12,80% they do not mean additional value, since they do not believe in the reality behind the trade marks. 25,50% intentionally looks for those trade marks in which they trust.

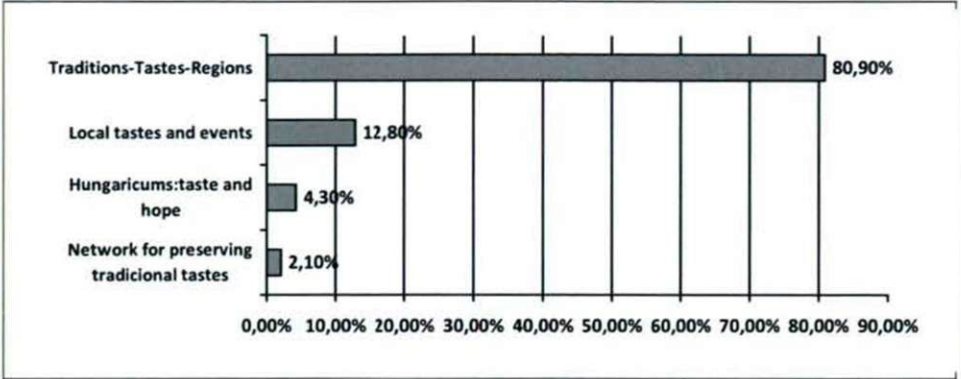


Figure 9. The knowledge of the acronym HIR

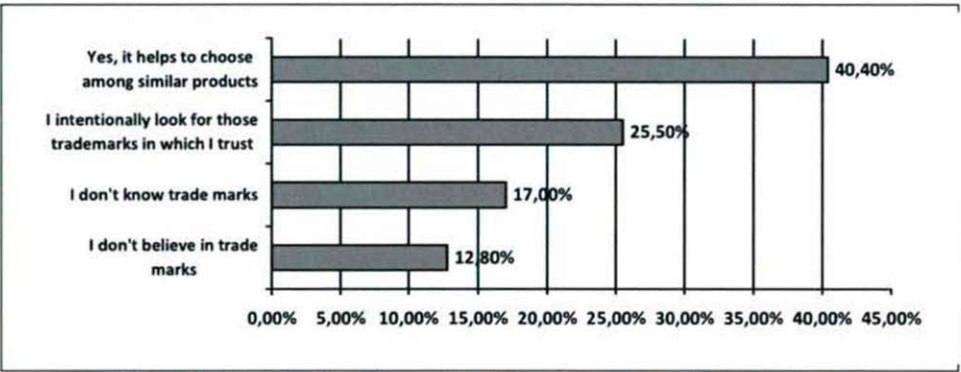


Figure 10. The role of a trade mark's additional value in the choice of a product

The respondents of the questionnaire obtain information to organise a certain trip from acquaintances (average 3,49%) or former personal experiences(average 3,78). The other factors had results under the average of 3 but over 2: news on tourism (2,78%), blogs, socila networking websites (2,09%), the own marketing of the catering establishment (2,82%), by chance (2,22%).

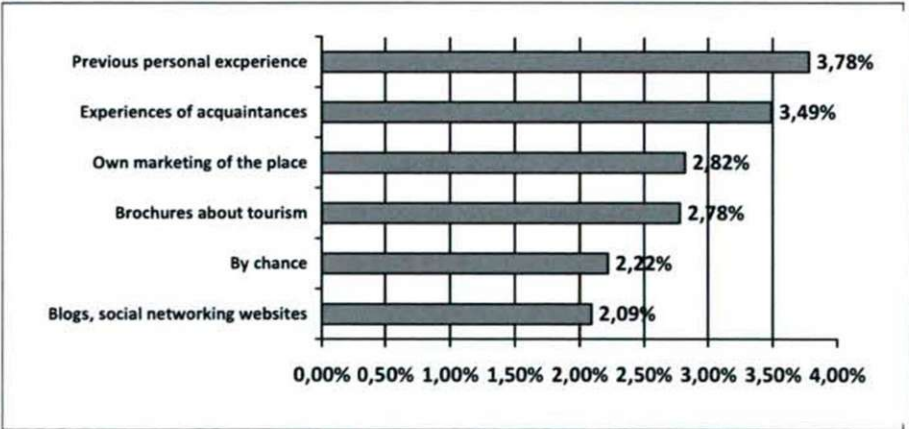


Figure 11. Gathering information to organise a certain trip

According to the majority it is very typical that Hungarian food products have a positive influence on the Hungarian economy, 4,20% of the average, 56,8% of the respondents gave mark 5 which means "very typical" in this case. Proportionately there are only a few of those who believe that Hungarian food products are better flavoured than import food products (the average is 3,67%) which means they are traditional (3,57%), reliable and safe (3,61%). The lowest average belongs to the innovative feature of Hungarian food products.

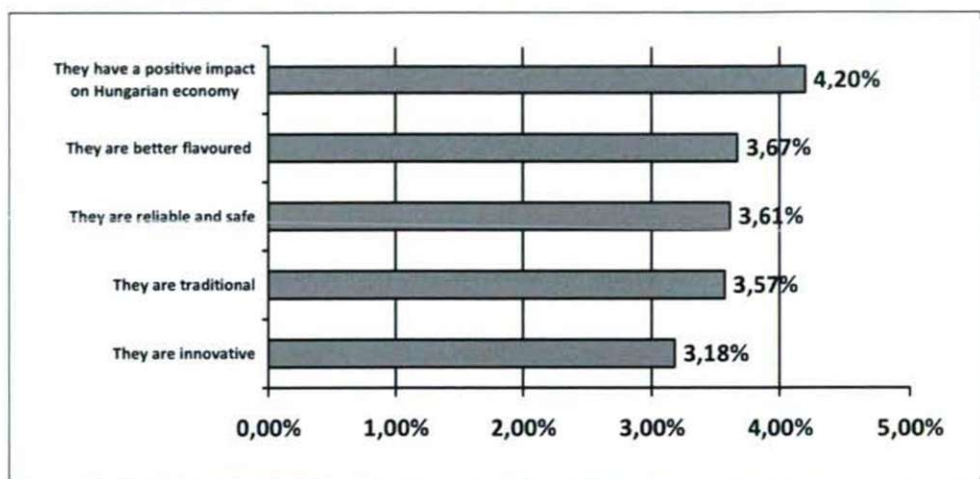


Figure 12. The degree of agreement in the case of statements referring to Hungarian food products

I interviewed the consumers how much certain features are typical of small-scale food products. The average of the marks was between 3,50 and 3,91 to features that I listed. The following result has concluded: reliability 3,72, good quality 3,74, traditional taste 3,91, environmental sustainability 3,51, the development of rural life standards 3,91, direct link between the producer and the customer 3,91.



Figure 13. The degree of agreement in the case of statements referring to small-scale food products

The tenth question of the survey was rather thought-provoking since the respondents had to match the listed trade marks with their definitions. Only 14,90% of the surveyed thought correctly that Traditions-Tastes-Regions meant the collection of traditional and regional

agricultural food products in which the Hunagrian pastry could be also found. A product can receive the Excellent Hungarian Food trade mark which is high quality and reliable. Only 23,40% of the respondents could give the correct answer to this.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Although the concept of rural tourism has been known for almost 20 years in our country, one of its important components, the rural guest-table service could not become widespread yet. In spite of the several western examples, the Hungarian attempts could not confirmed, although rural tourism could become one of the important factors of rural development through which the rural living standard and population-maintaining reduction could contribute to the mitigation of social tensions.

The 2004 food-hygienic European Union regulation and its Hungarian counterpart made it possible that if the farmer cannot reach a certain amount of products he can produce food under less strict conditions. The additional values and cultural and social roles of small-scale food products are considered to be essential by a lot of authors in the field of rural development. Some modifications of national legislations in 2010 (the possibility of pig-killing, ox-roasting, the expansion of catering for a bigger number of people, local spirit producing) make an attempt to boost national rural tourism by promoting gastronomic attractions in order to improve catering. Some further parts of the efforts with regard to the boost of rural tourism is the Traditions-Tastes-Regions program, or placing some parts of the hungaricums under national protection, and the new draft law about Hungarian national values and hungaricums.

According to the draft law, based on municipal, sectoral and cross-border values a complex collection, the National Depository would be established and from that the hungaricums would be selected which would stand on the top of the Hungarian Depository.

In order to make a product a hungaricum, different ministries and civil organisations could make a suggestion. Afterwards, they will have a distinguishing value, they will get a trade mark, so their marketing value will be rather big. On the other hand, however, since Hungary is a European Union member state it cannot encourage customers to buy Hungarian products. The most important results of my survey with regard to the level of knowledge and attitudes of local consumers are shown below. The local consumers usually leave their homes with the purpose of relaxation annually, through which they spend their free time in our country the most frequently or by leaving their region they spend it in Europe. In the choice of the place of relaxation the active leisure, tranquillity and silence play the most important roles. Moreover, from the given answers it seems that people obtain information in connection with the place from friends and acquaintances. In this way, the average consumer discovers the gastronomic values of the area but it is rare that gastronomy would attract the travel to a certain place (taking part in wine tours plays the least role). I consider to be a positive thing that several people are aware of the meaning of the HÍR acronym. The majority of consumers do not only know certain trade marks but those also possess extra values in the choice of a certain product. In connection with Hungarian food products consumers mainly think that they have a positive effect on Hungarian economy, they are better flavoured than import goods and they also agree with that they are reliable, safe and traditional. In the case of small-scale food products most of the people agree with the listed features (direct relationship between the producer and customer, the improvement of rural living standards, traditional tastes, environmental sustainability, good quality). Nevertheless, it turned out from the survey, that the respondents hardly feel the impact on environmental sustainability.

We can conclude from the given answers that the touristic attractive potential of local food products cannot be considered high. Gastronomic values do not play a crucial role in the choice of the destination of relaxation although it does not mean that this attitude remain the same in the future. It would be important to create that secondary attraction level which can mean regional products or local tastes, food specialties and their ethnic or historic values. The 2010 innovations in Hungarian legislation and the expectable further policies with the inclusion of gastronomic attractions they will hopefully promote the boosting of rural tourism which would have an important role in the development of the countryside and national economy.

The aim of the government and ministries is to harmonize, integrate and complete the existing systems of values (Hungarian product, excellent Hungarian food, wine competitions, the master of folklore, masterpiece of craft, attraction inventory, common treasure, valuemap, torque, folkdance classification) and the activation of society on local, regional and national levels.

The purpose is the awareness of our facilities, possibilities and specificums and the better exploitation of these at home and beyond the borders as well as the creation and operation of a value-based complex system.

The effect of the Hungaricum law may be the better exploitation of our agro-potential, the support of tourism and rural tourism, the incentive of consuming and producing national food and by these creating new workplaces.

Researchers taking part in tourismresearch agree that our values on rural places – which can be connected to folk traditions or can be based on folk traditions or intangible heritage between the man and the nature which surrounds him- must be protected and maintained. The forms of productions at the productive places, the characteristic features of the given lands and the people's traditions with production carry priceless values there the productive places of the area and the places which preserve traditions deserve more attention. The creation of respecting values based on real self-esteem would help in protecting these cultural places.

The government with the creation of the Hungaricum system, the involvement of local values and the stagnant parts of the country improves the economic, turistic, gastronomic, cultural and social efficiency of the country.

REFERENCES

1. Gyaraky, Z. (2010): *Tézisek a magyar élelmiszeripar stratégiai megújulásához*. Vidékfejlesztési Minisztérium, nyilvános munkaanyag
2. Pallóné Kisérdi, I. (2010): *A HAGYOMÁNYOK – ÍZEK – RÉGIÓK (HÍR) gyűjtemény és hasznosítása*. Hungarikumok a Parlamentben konferencia összefoglaló
3. Popovics, A. (2009): *A földrajzi helyhez kapcsolódó és a hagyományos magyar termékek lehetséges szerepe az élelmiszer-fogyasztói magatartásban*. SZIE Gödöllő